Proposed Decision, Rationale and Finding of No Significant Impact (FONSI)
For EA#OR135-01-EA-07 (Goose Butte Allotment Management Plan)

Dear Interested Public:

The following Proposed Decision and Finding of No Significant Impact for the Environmental Assessment of the proposed Goose Butte Allotment Management Plan is enclosed for your review. If you wish to protest or appeal this proposed decision, you may do so in accordance with the procedures described below.

Proposed Decision and Rationale

Proposed Decision: Under the authority of the Code of Federal Regulations (43 CFR 4120.2[c] and [d], 43 CFR 4130.2[a] and [d], and 43 CFR 4160.1[a]), it is my proposed decision to adopt and implement Alternative 1 (Proposed Action), and to issue a 10-year grazing lease subject to management actions described in the attached EA as a term and condition of the grazing lease.

Rationale: The proposed allotment management plan is in conformance with the Record of Decision (ROD) for the Spokane Resource Management Plan and amendment. The ROD 1987 (1987) (pages i and 24-27) specified that livestock grazing focus on achieving 50 percent utilization of key forage species through development of Allotment Management Plans (AMPs) to establish livestock use levels, grazing systems, seasons of use, and range improvements. This AMP also addresses the requirement to take actions to achieve Standards for Rangeland Health (43 CFR 4180.2).

Finding of No Significant Impact (FONSI)

On the basis of environmental assessment #OR135-01-EA-07 and other available information, it is my determination that Alternative 1 (Proposed Action) does not constitute a major federal action significantly affecting the quality of the human environment (a finding of no significant impact). Therefore, this action does not require preparation of an environmental impact statement.

Protest

If you wish to protest this proposed decision in accordance with 43 CFR § 4160.2, you are allowed 15 days from receipt of this notice, to file a protest at the above address. The receipt of notice is determined by certified mail or publication of a legal notice as stated in the EA. A protest must be in writing and specify the reasons, clearly and concisely, as to why you believe the proposed decision is in error. If a protest is filed within the time allowed, the statement of

reason and other pertinent information will be considered and a final decision will be issued with a right of appeal (43 CFR 4160.3[b]).

In the absence of a protest within the time allowed, the above proposed decision will constitute my final decision without further notice in accordance with 43 CFR § 4160.3[a]. If this becomes my final decision and you wish to appeal this decision for the purpose of a hearing before an Administrative Law Judge, in accordance with 43 CFR §§ 4160.4 and 4.470, you are allowed 45 days from receipt of this notice to file an appeal at the above address. The appeal must be in writing and shall state clearly and concisely why you think the decision is in error. Any request for a stay of this decision in accordance with 43 CFR § 4.21 must be filed with the appeal.

_____ _____

Kevin R. Devitt Date
Field Manager, Border Resource Area

OR135-01-EA-07
ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT
for
Goose Butte #00560
ALLOTMENT MANAGEMENT PLAN

Bureau of Land Management
Spokane District
August 2001

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Environmental Assessment #OR135-01-EA-07
For Grazing Lease #360560
Goose Butte Allotment Management Plan

Introduction

This Environmental Assessment (EA) addresses the Goose Butte Allotment (#360560) on lands administered by the Bureau of Land Management (BLM), Spokane District, Border Resource Area. The lands are located along the Crab Creek corridor in Lincoln County, Northeast Washington, approximately 12 miles south of Harrington on the Harrington/Tokio road (see attached map).

Purpose and Need

This proposal is needed to address the 10-year lease renewal for livestock grazing on lease 360560. Management goals consistent with multiple use objectives of livestock forage production, wildlife habitat, and watershed needs as outlined by the Spokane Resource Management Plan Record of Decision (ROD) 1987 are incorporated into this document. The Spokane Resource Management Plan Record of Decision (ROD) 1987, page 26, specifies developing Allotment Management Plans (AMPs) to establish livestock use levels, grazing systems, season of use, and range improvements.

There is potential on this allotment to improve rangeland, riparian areas, and wildlife habitat, as described in this document. This allotment management plan proposes grazing use consistent with goals to improve or maintain existing conditions.

General Location, Background, and Conformance

Location and Background: The BLM purchased the Goose Butte Allotment (2,722 acres) in February of 1991. Prior to acquisition by BLM, the area received moderate to heavy use by cattle in the spring, summer, and fall. The area likely was subject to various attempts at cultivation as is evident by the number of structures and old farm machinery located throughout the allotment. Since acquisition the allotment has had a grazing lease.

Conformance With Land Use Plans: The ROD specifies that Allotment Management Plans (AMPs) will be developed to establish livestock use levels, grazing systems, seasons of use, and the need for range improvements.

Alternatives

Three alternatives were analyzed (Proposed Action, Continue Existing Grazing Plan, and No Grazing). These alternatives are described individually below.

Alternative 1 - Proposed Action

This alternative proposes to renew the Goose Butte grazing allotment lease for 10 years, incorporating grazing strategies described below, consistent with or moving towards a desired future condition consistent with multiple use goals of the BLM.

Grazing Plan
Permitted use would be established at 200 AUMs. However, up to an additional 400 AUMs may be granted on a temporary non-renewable basis (at the managers discretion) based on resource conditions. Grazing by cattle would occur annually in either, but not both of the following seasons of use. The beginning and ending date would be determined on an annual basis depending on seasonal variability of weather and forage conditions.

- Early Season: (Grazing would occur for approximately 45-50 days within the period of April through May 15)

  or
- Late season (Grazing would occur for two months [60 days] within the period of October through December)

Exact dates of grazing and numbers of cattle would be determined on an annual basis by the Bureau of Land Management.

Until the proposed range improvements are implemented, grazing management would be 250 cattle for approximately two months (April 1 through May 31, or early to mid-October through early to mid-November).

Proposed Improvements

- A cross fence would be constructed north and south across Section 21. Initially this would be an electric fence and may be upgraded to a permanent fence if monitoring proves the fence necessary. Additionally, temporary electric fences may be constructed adjacent to Crab Creek to limit livestock access.
- Pass gates would be installed to allow for public access between pastures.
- A gravity system water development or a water ram would be used to supply water troughs on the north side of Sections 21 and 22. Water developments will also be placed on the north and south sides of Sections19 and 20 adjacent to Crab Creek.

Alternative 2 - Renew Existing Lease (Continuation of Present Lease)

This alternative would renew the existing lease for a period of 10 years with no new range improvements proposed.

Grazing levels and times of use would be 250 AUMs for two months (60 days), April 1 through May 31.

Alternative 3 - Not Issue Grazing Lease

The grazing lease would not be renewed, and no livestock would graze under Alternative 3. No range improvements would be constructed.

Management Actions/Project Design Features Common to Alternatives

Range Improvements

- Additional range improvements will be constructed, based on monitoring, to achieve or maintain rangeland health standards as required by 43 Code of Federal Regulations, Subpart 4180 (Rangeland Health). Range improvements include any project or construction activity (including fences, spring developments, and cattle guards) occurring within the rangeland ecosystem that is designed to achieve or maintain Rangeland Health Standards as described in Standards for Rangeland Health and Guidelines for Grazing Management (USDI 1997).

- The grazing lessee will maintain all range improvements. The BLM may contribute materials, if available, for major repair work.

Resource Inventories

- Appropriate resource inventories (including cultural, paleontological, botanical and wildlife) will be conducted prior to implementing specific projects on the allotment. If important resources are identified or located, the project would be redesigned to reduce or eliminate impacts to those resources. If cultural properties cannot be avoided, consultation will be conducted with the Office of Archaeology and Historic Preservation, tribal governments and historical societies, as appropriate, and in some cases the Advisory Council on Historic Preservation.

Noxious Weed and Invasive Plants

- Noxious weeds/invasive plants on the allotment will be treated in accordance with the Spokane District Noxious Weed Control Environmental Assessment.

Monitoring and Evaluation

- Monitoring and evaluation will be done in accordance with the Spokane District Monitoring Plan.

- Photo monitoring of riparian herbaceous communities, hardwood/shrub communities and stream form and function criteria will consider site capability and potential criteria,

consistent with Rangeland Health Standards. Also, additional photo monitoring sites will be established.

- Herbaceous stubble height in riparian areas and wetlands will be measured using the Photographic Guide to Median Stubble Heights technique.

- Utilization levels of key upland native plant species will be 50% utilization of current year's growth by weight.

- Upland bunch grasses and Spalding's catchfly sites will be monitored to assess the effects of grazing and to determine any needed changes in management.

- Invasive plant species will be monitored in the vicinity of Spalding's catchfly, and appropriate control measures taken if necessary.

- Other evaluations of the allotment use and resource values, in addition to the Rangeland Health Assessment, will be conducted, as needed, after reviewing the monitoring reports.

Administrative: This allotment will be managed as an (I) Improve allotment as outlined in the Spokane Resource Management Plan.

Affected Environment and Environmental Impacts

The allotment was used for the effects analysis as it relates to direct, indirect and cumulative effects of each alternative. Reasonable foreseeable future actions considered in the allotment analysis include various recreation (such as hunting and hiking), grazing, and vehicular road use. Reasonably foreseeable future actions are those activities that may occur over the next 10 years, which equates to the length of the proposed grazing lease.

The following text is presented by affected environment and impacts for each resource value considered in the analysis. The focus is on resources that have potential significant impacts.

Soils and Vegetation

Soils: There are several soil types ranging from shallow, well drained to very deep, well drained throughout the allotment. The soils have differing plant production and hydrologic capabilities and are subject to erosion at differing rates. Throughout the allotment, the soils are relatively stable and are considered to be functioning in terms of hydrologic function and lack of soil movement. Soil compaction throughout the allotment is isolated to areas such as roads and trails. Overall, the areas of compaction make up a small percentage of the allotment.

Vegetation/Plant Communities: The Goose Butte allotment includes several miles of Crab Creek and its surrounding uplands, a series of nearly flat benches separated by moderate to steep slopes. The slopes range from shrub-steppe to cliffs and talus. The allotment is within Daubenmire's

threetip sagebrush/Idaho fescue zone. This community is uncommon on the allotment, occurring only on some north-facing slopes well above the creek. The vegetative communities have been altered by past management and support a variety of native and non-native species The predominant upland vegetation is big sagebrush/cheatgrass; the historic native grass component was probably bluebunch wheatgrass and/or Idaho fescue, and small amounts of these bunchgrasses are present, along with Sandberg's bluegrass. On shallow soils, stiff sagebrush/Sandberg's bluegrass occurs. The riparian communities along Crab Creek are primarily herbaceous; scattered clusters of willow and hawthorn do occur, but are less common than on the adjoining allotments (Rocky Ford and Big Bend). Many non-native species occur in the riparian zone, which has been heavily disturbed by long-term livestock grazing. Further from the creek, native plants are a significantly larger component of the flora.

Special Status Plant Species: Spalding's catchfly, a plant currently proposed for Federal listing and a state Threatened species, occurs on the allotment. Spalding's catchfly is a non-rhizomatous perennial species with annual shoots that appear in June, flower in July and August, and die back in August or September, although the dry shoots with empty seed capsules typically remain standing, and identifiable, through the fall and early winter. During the growing season, the plants are covered with glandular hairs and are very sticky, and thereby probably not attractive as forage, but they could be consumed incidentally if cattle are eating neighboring vegetation.

Scattered clusters of Spalding's catchfly occur in the Goose Butte allotment, totaling approximately 100 plants in the 1993 survey. Individual plants may remain dormant during one or more growing seasons and reappear in a later year, resulting in large fluctuations in apparent population size from year to year.

Washington polemonium, a state Threatened species and Bureau Sensitive species, also occurs on the allotment. It is a perennial that produces annual shoots from a subterranean crown; shoots emerge in March and April, flowering occurs during May and June, and the shoots begin to die back shortly thereafter. Removal of shoot tips by grazing/browsing animals is occasionally observed; one instance occurred in a pasture with no domestic livestock, so was apparently attributable to deer, and another instance occurred in a pasture grazed by horses. Because Washington polemonium occurs in moist swales and stream terraces, invasion by noxious weeds such as Canada thistle and Russian knapweed is a threat to populations of this species.

The largest population of Washington polemonium on the Goose Butte allotment has about 60 plants and is protected from livestock grazing by existing fences. Patches of polemonium occur in other locations as well.

Snake River cryptantha, a State Sensitive and Bureau Assessment species, is also found in the Goose Butte allotment.

Plants of Cultural Interest: Berry-producing plants, including serviceberry, choke cherry, golden currant, wax currant, elderberry, and Wood's rose, occur near Crab Creek and in "shrub garlands" associated with talus slopes. Culturally important root crop plants include bigseed

lomatium and bitterroot on shallow soil areas, and nineleaf lomatium and yampah in meadows and gently sloping grasslands.

Noxious Weeds: Noxious weeds (Russian knapweed, Canada thistle, and occasionally bull thistle) are found in wetland areas within the allotment. The treatment of noxious weeds is an ongoing process, and control measures have been addressed in the Spokane District Noxious Weed Control Environmental Assessment.

Impacts on Soils and Vegetation

Soils

Actions Common to Alternative 1 & 2: The presence of livestock at different times of the year may reduce the potential for soil disturbance and compaction due to differences in soil moisture. However, the existing roads and cattle trails (which are concentrated areas of soil compaction) would likely continue to be used by recreationists, cattle and other wildlife.

Alternative 3 (No Grazing): Under the No Grazing Alternative, most native bunch grasses, shrubs and forbs would likely maintain or increase their populations. Cattle would not contribute to soil compaction.

Vegetation

Alternative 1: The direct effects of grazing would be plants that are consumed or trampled, indirect effects such as soil compaction and damage to soil surface crusts, which could alter water percolation patterns, reduce vigor of native species, and increase the likelihood of invasion by non-native plants that could compete with the natives. Monitoring of bunchgrass utilization, with the stipulation that livestock will be moved if utilization reaches 50%, is intended to minimize the probability that these effects will occur. Grazing also reduces the accumulation of grass litter, and dense litter can reduce the likelihood of seedling establishment and affect competitive relationships among plant species.

Construction of the north-south cross fence would provide for more control of livestock locations and allow stock to be moved from one pasture to another if utilization criteria indicated a need for such a move. Native plant species would be expected to maintain or increase in cover. The proposed water developments would tend to concentrate livestock near their locations, resulting in more intense grazing and trampling activity in the vicinity and an increase in non-native weedy species in that area, but a decrease in the amount of livestock activity in the riparian zone. As a result, conditions for riparian vegetation recovery would be improved. The water developments are unlikely to have a major impact on upland vegetation utilization, although they might influence stock to spend more time on the north side of the creek.

Alternative 2: Direct and indirect effects of grazing would occur as in Alternative 1, but might be distributed differently across the allotment. Native plant species would likely maintain or increase in cover overall, but in the absence of the fence, livestock could concentrate in one area

for the entire season of use, resulting in greater impacts to that area. If the water developments are not constructed, livestock would continue to use the riparian area heavily, and recovery of riparian vegetation would be inhibited.

Alternative 3 (No Grazing): Native plant species would be expected to maintain or increase in cover. Competitive relationships among plant species could change in response to removal of grazing, accumulation of litter, and reduction of soil disturbance. Recovery of riparian vegetation would be enhanced.

Special Status Species

Spalding's catchfly

Alternative 1: Grazing would occur largely during periods when Spalding's catchfly is dormant, avoiding direct effects of livestock grazing such as consumption and trampling of the plants. During years when early season grazing is occurring, livestock could be present at the time when shoots are first emerging, but they are unlikely to concentrate their activities on the steep slopes where Spalding's catchfly grows. This allotment has experienced years of livestock grazing at levels higher than are presently occurring, so it is likely that the sites in which these plants have persisted have received relatively light livestock use because of their steepness and distance from water, relative to more preferred grazing sites. Indirect effects are also likely to be minimal in these sites.

Alternative 2: As under Alternative 1, direct effects on Spalding's catchfly would be unlikely. Indirect effects would be similar to Alternative 1.

Alternative 3 (No Grazing): Since livestock would not be present on the allotment, no direct effects of grazing would occur. Litter accumulation might be greater, which could decrease the likelihood of seedling establishment for Spalding's catchfly; however, the effect is unlikely to be large, as it appears that the catchfly population sites receive minimal grazing under the current regime. The potential for establishment of competing non-native weedy species would also be reduced.

Washington polemonium

Alternative 1: Livestock would be on the allotment during the period of growth and flowering for Washington polemonium during some years, so direct effects of consumption and/or trampling could occur. The only site likely to be affected (because of its accessibility) is the upland depression site, which has a small population (11 plants). Indirect effects such as weed invasion could also occur at this site; it is already somewhat weedy.

Alternative 2: Livestock would be on the allotment during the period of growth and flowering for Washington polemonium every year, so any direct effects of livestock on the plants could occur each year. Indirect effects would be similar to Alternative 1.

Alternative 3 (No Grazing): No livestock would be present on the allotment, so no direct effects of grazing would occur. Litter accumulation might be greater, which could decrease the likelihood of seedling establishment for Washington polemonium. The potential for establishment of competing non-native weedy species could also be reduced.

Water/Riparian Resources

Approximately six miles of Crab Creek flows through the Goose Butte allotment. This perennial stream is currently rated as Proper Functioning Condition (PFC). Historically, prior to BLM acquisition, the riparian areas on the allotment were grazed heavily by livestock. Since acquisition, grazing systems have enabled recovery of riparian areas. Although hardwood communities are lacking throughout the allotment, vegetation such as hardwood/shrub communities and riparian obligate species are increasing.
The dominant herbaceous species along the riparian corridor is reed canary grass with other plants such as sedges, rush, and spiked bulrush increasing. Riparian areas throughout the allotment are important for maintaining optimal stream conditions for aquatic species. Riparian areas also help maintain proper stream form and function (stream sinuosity, gradient, width/depth ratio, and erosion/deposition).

Impacts on Riparian Resources

Alternative 1: Grazing management would be consistent with the maintenance and improvement of riparian areas. Soil and bank stability may be temporarily impacted in riparian areas during periods when livestock are present, but would be expected to recover during periods of non-use. Timing, duration and utilization levels would be consistent with riparian values under this alternative.

Alternative 2: Grazing during the same season annually may reduce vegetative diversity on the allotment. In addition, not implementing a cross fence would limit the opportunity to better manage livestock.

Alternative 3 (No Grazing): The No Grazing Alternative could expedite recovery of hardwood/shrub communities by reducing mechanical damage and browsing by livestock. Riparian herbaceous diversity could be reduced by the increased competition from non-native species.

Wildlife Habitat

The allotment has several plant communities and state priority habitats that support various wildlife species. Areas such as perennial stream wetlands, aspen/shrub garlands, lentic wetlands, prairie/shrub-steppe, and shrub-steppe communities provide a variety of habitat for cover, nesting, escape, foraging, brood-rearing and migration of wildlife species. State Priority Habitats on the allotment include cliff and talus slopes, stream, riparian and grassland /shrub-steppe, comprising over 90 percent of the allotment. Several basalt cliffs occur adjacent to Crab Creek

throughout the allotment providing important habitat for bats and nesting raptors (Table 1). Wildlife that use this allotment include upland game, waterfowl, game and non-game mammals, and migratory land birds (Table 1).

Special Status Species: No federally designated Endangered, Threatened, or Proposed to list species are known to occur on the allotment. However, four species of concern have been documented on the allotment including ferruginous hawk (State Threatened and a Federal Species of Concern), Swainson's hawk (Bureau Tracking), silver-haired bats (Special Status Species), and Caspian tern (Bureau Tracking in Washington). The area lies within the historic range for greater sage-grouse (Federally petitioned to propose and State Threatened), and Columbian sharp-tailed grouse (Federal Species of Concern, State Threatened) but neither species is known to currently occupy the area.

Riparian/Wetland Habitat: Riparian areas function as key wildlife habitat in many ecosystems. They usually contain high wildlife diversity and densities, provide important breeding habitat and seasonal ranges, and are utilized as key movement corridors. Migratory birds, for example, rely on riparian areas for nesting and brood rearing. Other wildlife (including mule deer, waterfowl and amphibian species) utilize the riparian/wetland habitat.

Impacts Wildlife Habitat

Impacts Common to all Action Alternatives: There would be no effects to Federally designated Endangered, Threatened, or Proposed to list species, and/or critical habitat, as a result of implementing any alternative. Neither action alternative would likely impact Bureau Special Status Species habitat or contribute to the need to list the ferruginous hawk, greater sage grouse, Columbia sharp-tailed grouse.

Alternative 1: Grazing could disturb the nesting/brood-rearing activities of migratory land birds, waterfowl and shorebirds on the allotment, as well as the egg-laying/rearing activities of amphibians. Ground-nesting species could suffer mortality, either directly through trampling of eggs/young or indirectly through loss of habitat. Grazing during March would decrease potential for mortality, whereas grazing in April and May (the peak nesting/rearing times) could directly and indirectly, cause mortality from trampling and removal of vegetation. Increasing the AUMs to 600, as provided for in this alternative, would increase the potential for livestock induced disturbance.

Alternative 2: Grazing during the same season annually could decrease forage diversity of the site. In addition, not implementing a cross fence would remove the opportunity to better manage livestock movement along the riparian area. Riparian vegetation would be less likely to recover under this alternative than Alternative 1.

Alternative 3 (No Grazing): The no grazing alternative could allow for increased aspen and riparian shrub regeneration, thereby improving some wildlife habitat availability. In addition, no

grazing by livestock could decrease direct and indirect impacts to wildlife species (e.g., trampling, mechanical damage, loss of recruitment).

Fisheries Resources

Historically, Crab Creek was an important recreational fishery. In recent years, fishing pressure has increased from recreational users as the population of rainbow trout in Crab Creek has increased. The health of the existing rainbow trout fishery in Crab Creek is associated with the riparian vegetation and condition of the stream. Riparian conditions of Crab Creek have improved remarkably since acquisition of the Goose Butte allotment. Recent visual surveys in two pools, both upstream and downstream of the Tokio bridge, identified over 100 juvenile rainbow trout in each of the pools. The stream has narrowed and deepened, and the total population of rainbow trout has increased over the last 8 years. The recruitment of mature hardwood/shrub vegetation and stream stability have increased to varying degrees in different portions of the allotment.

Impacts on Fisheries Resources

Alternative 1: Timing, duration and utilization levels under Alternative 1 would be consistent with fisheries and riparian habitat values, considering the provision for riparian and upland monitoring and grazing flexibility. Grazing in either, but not both of the seasons described, would allow for regrowth of vegetation.

Alternative 2: Reduced riparian vegetation, lack of recruitment of hardwood species, and mechanical bank damage from livestock could contribute to reduced aquatic habitat.

Alternative 3: The No Grazing alternative could reduce mechanical damage to streambanks caused by cattle, and also increase recruitment of riparian species affected by cattle grazing.

Cultural Resources/Native American Values

The Goose Butte Allotment is located within traditional use areas of members of the Spokane Tribe of Indians and the Colville Confederated Tribes. The area's thin lithosols are typical of lands where Native American people have gathered edible roots for centuries, and berries, fish, and other traditionally used resources are also available on the allotment. Archaeological evidence for aboriginal use of the Crab Creek vicinity includes a number of residential sites, some dating back thousands of years. Native American use of the region continues to the present day, with certain lands in Lincoln County regularly visited by Indian people for root-digging and other traditional activities.

In 2000, the BLM conducted three small cultural resources surveys, totaling approximately 50 acres, in the Goose Butte/Rocky Ford grazing allotments. A number of cultural sites were identified and recorded. In an attempt to determine if sacred sites, traditional cultural properties, or other areas of tribal or cultural concern may be affected by the proposed actions, the BLM

initiated consultation with the Confederated Tribes of the Colville Reservation, the Spokane Tribe of Indians, and the Washington State Office of Archaeology and Historic Preservation through letters dated May 1, 2000 and March 23, 2001.

Impacts on Cultural Resources

Alternatives 1 and 2: This alternative could reduce impacts to cultural resources. Grazing rotations that alternate annually between early season grazing (approximately April through May 15) and late-season grazing (approximately October through December) would decrease the potential to impact cultural plant species. Grazing April through May 15 could effect the harvesting of some traditional plants by removing the above ground vegetative portions used for identification.

Alternative 3 (No Grazing): This alternative would eliminate livestock impacts to cultural resources and traditionally used plant species. Under this alternative, denser vegetation could limit the potential for discovery of unreported cultural sites and artifacts.

Recreation

The area of Goose Butte offers several miles of Crab Creek frontage. Recreation activities throughout this area include hunting, fishing, horseback riding, and Special Recreation Permits including annual field trial events.

The bridge crossing on Tokio Road at Crab Creek provides a public access point for quality fly-fishing. To safely accommodate parking for increasing recreational use in the area, parking was expanded on the east side of Crab Creek in 2000.

Impacts on Recreation

Alternatives 1 and 2: The presence of livestock may discourage some recreational activities. Current cattle stocking levels and pasture utilization guidelines have resulted in few impacts on recreation. Future conflicts between the different user groups and multiple uses are unlikely, but may increase due to projected increases in recreational use.

Alternative 3 (No Grazing): Vegetation along Crab Creek, especially reed canary grass, could become dense and make stream access difficult for fishing.

Cumulative Effects

This allotment is within the Upper Crab Creek sub-basin (1,172,104 acres), which includes four percent BLM-managed land (51,267 acres). Of the 51,267 acres managed BLM within the sub-basin, approximately 40,756 acres are managed as grazing allotments. The 2,722-acre Goose Butte Allotment represents about 5.3 percent of the BLM-managed acreage in the sub-basin, and approximately 0.23 percent of the entire sub-basin. Because of this small ratio of public lands

within the sub-basin, the impacts of actions proposed in this allotment are not expected to contribute cumulatively to any substantial impact on any resource value.

Region-wide conversion of native grasslands to intensive agriculture such as grain farming, and degradation of rangelands has reduced the availability of suitable habitat for Spalding's Catchfly and Washington Polemonium. The presence of invasive species on neighboring lands, and the use of chemical herbicides to control those invasive plants, also threatens these and other native species.

On a landscape level, shrub-steppe habitats have been identified as an endangered ecosystem throughout the nation (including the Columbia Basin) due to limited and declining availability and high vulnerability to habitat alteration. The proposed action to include range improvements could improve shrub steppe and riparian habitat in this allotment.

Other Resource Elements Analyzed

Environmental Justice: No disproportionately high and adverse human health or environmental effects on minority or low-income populations are expected to result from implementation of any of the alternatives addressed in this EA.

Socioeconomic

The economic value of this grazing lease is approximately $673.00 per year at current BLM animal unit month costs.

Impacts on Socioeconomics

Under the action alternatives (Alternatives 1 and 2), the BLM would receive $673 annually in grazing fees. Under Alternative 3, there would be a loss of $673 in receipts in the grazing program and also a loss of pasture use to the lessee.

Other Resource Elements Considered: Other resource values or elements considered in analyzing the alternatives included:

- Air quality
- Paleontological resources
- Wild and scenic rivers
- Prime/unique farmlands
- Special area designations
- Wilderness
- Hazardous/solid materials
- Water Quality

Air quality would not be affected. There are no known fish-bearing waters or 303d listed water bodies. None of the other elements listed above occur on the allotment.

Coordination With Other Agencies, Groups, and Individuals

Grazing Lessee (Bill Curtis)

Consultation:
- The Honorable Colleen Cawston, Chair, Confederated Tribes of the Colville Reservation
- The Honorable Bruce Wynne, Chair, Spokane Tribe of Indians
- Dr. Robert Whitlam, State Archaeologist, Washington State Office of Archaeology and Historic Preservation

The EA will be made available for public review and comment, as announced through a legal publication in the Spokesman Review newspaper, a major publication in eastern Washington; a news release to the Davenport Times newspaper, a publication in Lincoln County; and on the Spokane BLM website <www.or.blm.gov/spokane>. Copies of the EA will also be mailed for review and comment to the grazing lessee, tribes, and others listed above.

Table 1. Wildlife Species Sightings During 2000 Surveys.

Mammals	**Reptiles**	**Fish**
• Coyote (*Canis latrans*) • Mule deer (*Odocoileus hemionus*) • American badger (*Taxidea taxus*)	• Western terrestrial garter snake (*Thamnophis elegans*) • Western rattlesnake (*Crotalus viridis*)	• Rainbow trout (*Salmo gairdneri*) • Sucker sp. (*Catostomus* sp.)

Birds

American coot (*Fulica americana*)
American robin (*Turdus migratorius*)
Bank swallow (*Riparia riparia*)
Barn swallow (*Hirundo rustica*)
Black crowned night heron (*Nycticorax nycticorax*)
Blue-winged teal (*Anas discors*)
Brewer's sparrow (*Spizella breweri*)
Brown-headed cowbird (*Molothrus ater*)
Bullock's oriole (*Icterus bullockii*)
Caspian tern (*Sterna caspia*)*
Cinnamon teal (*Anas cyanoptera*)
Cliff swallow (*Petrochelidon pyrrhonota*)
Common merganser (*Mergus merganser*)
Common nighthawk (*Chordeiles minor*)
Common snipe (*Gallinago gallinago*)
Eastern kingbird (*Tyrannus tyrannus*)
Gadwall (*Anas strepera*
Great blue heron (*Ardea herodias*)
Killdeer (*Charadrius vociferus*)
Lazuli bunting (*Passerina amoena*)
Mourning dove (*Zanaida macroura*)
Northern flicker (*Colaptes auratus*)
Northern rough-winged swallow (*Stelgidopteryx serripennis*)
Northern shoveler (*Anas clypeata*)
Ring-necked pheasant (*Phasianus colchicus*)
Red-tailed hawk (*Buteo jamaicensis*)
Rock wren (*Salpinctes obsoletus*)
Say's phoebe (*Sayornis saya*)
Song sparrow (*Melospiza melodia*)
Spotted sandpiper (*Actitis macularia*)
Swainson's hawk (*Buteo swainsoni*)*
Violet-green swallow (*Tachycineta thalassina*)
Western meadowlark (*Sturnella neglecta*)
Yellow warbler (*Dendroica petechia*)

* = Species of Concern

Map 1